

## Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04  
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01  
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/094 W

-----121045Z 126811 /23-11

R 101615Z MAY 77  
FM USMISSION GENEVA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7217

C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 3576

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: RW (MDW)  
SUBJECT: RW (MDW): RW(MDW)/CW BILATERALS WITH SOVIETS: MAY 10, 1977  
(GENEVA MESSAGE NO. 3

1. AT MEETING OF RW(MDW)/CW BILATERALS WITH SOVIETS  
TODAY, MAY 10, BUCHHEIM READ FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

BEGIN TEXT

MR. AMBASSADOR, AS WE AGREED IN OUR INITIAL DISCUSSION  
YESTERDAY, WILL OFFER SOME COMMENTS TODAY ON THE SUBJECT  
OF RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS.

BRIEFLY, RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS ARE MEANS OF ATTACK WHICH  
PRODUCE THEIR EFFECTS BY NATURAL RADIATIONS FROM RADIOACTIVE  
MATERIALS. SUCH WEAPONS CAN CAUSE DAMAGE TO HUMAN BEINGS,  
OTHER FORMS OF LIFE AND MATERIAL. IN PAST DISCUSSIONS OF  
SUCH WEAPONS, PARTICULAR EMPHASIS HAS BEEN PLACED ON THEIR  
EFFECTS ON HUMAN BEINGS.

RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS HAVE BEEN GENERALLY ACCEPTED AS  
ONE OF THE ACKNOWLEDGED TYPES OF "WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION"  
SINCE 1948, WHEN THEY WERE INCLUDED WITHIN THE UNITED  
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NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S DEFINITION OF THAT TERM.

FURTHERMORE, RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS WERE INCLUDED AS  
"WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION" BY THE SOVIET UNION IN 1962  
IN A DRAFT TREATY ON GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT, AND  
WERE AGAIN CITED IN 1976 AND 1977 BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
USSR AND OTHER COUNTRIES AS FALLING INTO THIS CATEGORY

OF WEAPONS.

IN 1967 AND 1969, MALTA MADE PROPOSALS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE UNITED NATIONS WHICH REFERRED TO RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS.

A WORKING PAPER WAS INTRODUCED IN THE CCD IN 1970 CONCERNING RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS AND, IN DISCUSSION OF THAT PAPER, THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SOVIET UNION SUGGESTED THAT JUDGMENT ON THE USEFULNESS OF A PROHIBITION ON RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS SHOULD AWAIT FURTHER SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS.

SINCE 1948, THE OTHER TYPES OF MASS-DESTRUCTION WEAPONS INCLUDED IN THE 1948 UNITED NATIONS DEFINITION -- NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE, BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS -- HAVE BECOME THE SUBJECTS OF PROHIBITION OR LIMITATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS. IN ADDITION, IN THE CASES OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS, INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSIONS ARE ACTIVELY PURSUING FURTHER LIMITING AGREEMENTS.

IN CONTRAST TO THESE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CONTINUED EFFORTS, DESPITE PROPOSALS AS I HAVE JUST MENTIONED, NO SPECIFIC STEPS HAVE YET BEEN TAKEN TO ERECT LIMITATIONS ON RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS. IN LARGE PART, THIS IS DUE TO THE FACT THAT RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS HAVE NOT APPEARED TO HAVE MILITARY APPLICATIONS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO JUSTIFY THEIR POTENTIAL COST AS COMPARED WITH OTHER AVAILABLE WEAPONS.

THE U.S., FOR ITS PART, HAS NO MILITARY INTEREST AT THIS TIME IN RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS. HOWEVER, THE U.S. HAS  
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RECOGNIZED THAT SERIOUS AND WIDESPREAD DESTRUCTION COULD RESULT FROM THE USE IN WEAPONS OF VARIOUS RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS WHICH MIGHT BE MANUFACTURED FOR THIS PURPOSE. CERTAIN RADIOACTIVE ISOTOPES HAVE BEEN MENTIONED BY SOVIET EXPERTS AS BEING OF PARTICULAR INTEREST FOR RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS. THESE ISOTOPES INCLUDE STRONTIUM-90, CESIUM-137, RUTHENIUM-106, CERIUM-144 AND ZIRCONIUM-95.

ASIDE FROM POSSIBLE MILITARY USE AS WEAPONS, AND POSSIBLY MORE IMPORTANT FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT TERRORISTS OR OTHER ILLEGAL GROUPS MIGHT SEEK TO CONTAMINATE AREAS FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME BY SEIZING OR DIVERTING QUANTITIES OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS PRODUCED IN NUCLEAR POWER OPERATIONS OR THEIR PEACEFUL NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES AND CONVERTING THEM INTO WEAPONS.

ON NOVEMBER 18, 1976, THE DIRECTOR OF THE U.S. ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY SUGGESTED, IN A STATEMENT TO THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THAT SOME APPROPRIATE

INTERNATIONAL FORUM, SUCH AS THE CCD, MIGHT CONSIDER AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT THAT WOULD PROHIBIT THE USE OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS AS RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS. SUCH AN AGREEMENT WOULD COMPLEMENT THE GENEVA PROTOCOL OF 1925, WHICH PROHIBITS THE USE IN WAR OF POSON GAS AND BACTERIOLOGICAL WEAPPONS. IN ADDITION, SUCH AN AGREEMENT COULD CONTAIN A PROVISION FOR APPROPRIATE MEASURES BY GOVERNMENTS TO PRECLUDE DIVERSION OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS FOR USE AS RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS.

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET COME TO ANY FIRM CONCLUSIONS ON THE SPECIFIC CONTENT OF SUCH A POSSIBLE AGREEMENT, AND WE ARE THEREFORE NOT YET PREPARED TO OFFER NEW UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT VIEWS ON SPECIFIC SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS. IT MIGHT, HOWEVER, BE USEFUL TO EXPLORE BRIEFLY A FEW TECHNICAL QUESTIONS RELATED TO RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS IN A POSSIBLE AGREEMENT.

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IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT A PROHIBITION ON RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS IN ANY SUCH AGREEMENT SHOULD EXTEND ONLY TO THE USE OF RDIOACTIVE MATERIALS AS RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS. ANY SUCH PROHIBITION SHOULD NOT EXTEND TO RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS PRODUCED OR DISSEMINATED BY NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS. SUCH PRODUCTION AND DISSEMNATION OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS, OF COURSE, WOULD BE AN UNAVOIDABLE RESULT OF THE USE OF SUCH WEAPONS AND IS AN ENTIRELY SEPARATE SUBJECT. FURTHERORE, ANY AGREEMENT ON RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS MUST NOT PROHIBIT LEGITIMATE MILITARY USES OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS FOR PURPOSES OTHER THAN AS RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS -- FOR EXAMPLE, THE USE OF SMALL QUANTITIES OF RADIOLOGICAL MATERIALS IN MILITARY ELECTRONICS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT, OR THE USE OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS IN NUCLEAR PROPULSION SYSTEMS.

IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT ANY CONSIDERATION OF RESTRUCTIONS ON RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS MUST BE COMPATIBLE WITH, AND NOT INTERFERE WITH, THE IMPORTANT EFFORTS IN OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORUMS TO REACH AGREEMENT ON GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR THE PHYSICAL PROTECTION OF NUCLEAR FUEL-CYCLE MATERIALS.

I SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT WHAT I HAVE SAID REPRESENTS ONLY THE PRELIMINARY THINKING OF MY DELEGATION ON THIS QUESTION. WE WOULD BE MOST INTERESTED IN HEARING THE VIEWS OF THE SOVIET SIDE ON THE QUESTION OF RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS. EN TEXT SORENSON

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## Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009